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Advancement of women

Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.3/60/L.17

Statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly

I. Requests contained in the draft resolution

1. Under the terms of operative paragraphs 14, 15 and 21 of draft resolution A/C.3/60/L.17, the General Assembly would:

(a) Decide to authorize the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to hold three annual sessions of three weeks each, with a one-week pre-session working group for each session, effective from January 2006 as a temporary measure, and to continue to authorize two annual sessions of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol to the Convention;

(b) Also decide to authorize the Committee to meet on a temporary basis in 2006 and 2007 for up to seven days in parallel working groups during its third (July/August) annual session in 2006, and its first (January) and third (July/August) annual sessions in 2007, taking due account of equitable geographical distribution, for the purpose of considering reports of States parties submitted under article 18 of the Convention;

(c) Request the Secretary-General, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 54/4 of 6 October 1999, to provide the resources, including staff and facilities, necessary for the effective functioning of the Committee within its full mandate, taking into account in particular the entry into force of the Optional Protocol.

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II. Relationship of the proposed decision to the biennial programme plan for the period 2006-2007 and the programme of work contained in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007

2. The activities to be carried out relate to: programme 1, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management; subprogramme 2, Gender issues and advancement of women, of programme 7, Economic and social affairs; and subprogramme 4, Support services, of programme 24, Management and support services, of the biennial programme plan for the period 2006-2007. They fall under: section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management; section 9, Economic and social affairs; and section 28D, Office of Central Support Services, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007.

3. Provisions have been made in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007 for travel and per diem costs of the 23 members of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to attend its two annual regular sessions in New York of 15 working days each and, for each session, a five-day pre-session working group meeting, and the cost of attendance at two annual meetings of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol, as well as for substantive, conference and support services to the Committee, the pre-session working group and the Working Group on Communications.

III. Activities by which the proposals will be implemented

4. The decision to hold three annual sessions of the Committee, called for in the draft resolution and referred to in paragraph 1 (a) above, would give rise to two additional sessions in the biennium 2006-2007 and is expected to allow the Committee to consider a greater number of States parties' reports. The Committee currently considers 16 States' reports annually. Should the draft resolution of the Third Committee be endorsed, it is estimated that the Committee will be able to consider between 30 and 35 reports per year and effectively eliminate the backlog of reports. The other expectations with regard to an extension of the Committee's meeting times and changes to its methods of work are that the establishment of parallel working groups called for in paragraph 15 of the draft resolution would effectively double the volume of States parties' reports considered at the Committee's sessions and that the Secretariat would provide high-quality servicing and support to the parallel working groups that would be considering States parties' reports simultaneously. It is estimated that an additional amount of $505,700 would be required in the biennium 2006-2007 to provide for the travel, daily subsistence allowance and terminal expenses of members of the Committee attending the two additional sessions and two additional pre-session working group meetings.

5. Under the supervision of the Chief of the Women's Rights Section of the Division for the Advancement of Women at the P-5 level, a staff member at the P-4 level serves as the Secretary of the Committee. In addition, the incumbents of one P-4 and one P-2 post provide substantive support for the Optional Protocol to the Convention, which came into force in 2000. One P-4 and one P-3 post are allocated

for supporting the human rights work undertaken by United Nations intergovernmental bodies such as the General Assembly and the Commission on the Status of Women. The incumbents of the latter four posts also assist in the substantive servicing of the sessions of the Committee.

6. To support the additional workload of the Committee foreseen in the draft resolution, general temporary assistance equivalent to 18 work-months at the P-3 level, estimated at $233,900, is proposed, on a non-recurrent basis for the biennium 2006-2007, to assist with:

(a) The analysis of States parties' reports on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, drawing upon prior reports and other relevant information, including from United Nations sources;

(b) The preparation of draft lists of issues and questions on States parties' reports under consideration by the Committee;

(c) In-session support to Committee experts in the preparation of draft concluding comments on States parties' reports;

(d) The identification of gaps existing at the country level in the implementation of the Convention;

(e) Substantive support, especially during the sessions of the Committee with parallel working groups.

7. The current mandate of the Committee is to meet twice per year for three weeks each time. A one-week pre-session working group follows each session. Should the draft resolution be adopted, it would entail one additional three-week session in each year of the 2006-2007 biennium, which would require interpretation services in the six official languages. The additional one-week pre-session working group meeting to be held following each of the additional three-week sessions would require interpretation services in English, French and Spanish only. For the thirty-fifth and thirty-eighth sessions of the Committee, pre-session documentation is estimated at 400 pages and 1,200 pages respectively. Each session would require 150 pages of in-session and 150 pages of post-session documentation in the six languages. For the existing two three-week annual sessions the interpretation requirements are expected to remain unchanged, while the documentation requirements will increase to 1,800 pages of pre-session, 200 pages of in-session and 200 pages of post-session documentation in all six languages. The documentation for the additional one-week session of the pre-session working group in each year and for the parallel seven-day working meetings to be held in July/August 2006 (during the thirty-sixth session), January 2007 (during the thirty-seventh session) and July/August 2007 (during the thirty-ninth session) is included in the overall forecast. Summary records would be provided for all the meetings of the Committee, except the pre-session working group meetings.

8. Should draft resolution A/C.3/60/L.17 be adopted, the exact dates for all the meetings of the Committee, consisting of three three-week annual sessions of the Committee, three one-week annual pre-session working group meetings and three parallel working group meetings to be held in 2006-2007, will be determined by consultation between the substantive secretariat and the Department for General

Assembly and Conference Management subject to the availability of conference facilities and services.

9. The adoption of draft resolution A/C.3/60/L.17 would cause modifications in the number of meetings cited in the programme of work contained in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007. In the narrative of subprogramme 2, Gender issues and advancement of women, paragraph 9.56 (v) would be revised as follows:

a. Substantive servicing of meetings: substantive and technical servicing of Committee plenary and working group meetings (180); substantive and technical servicing of pre-session working group meetings (60); substantive and technical servicing of parallel working groups (30); substantive and technical servicing of working group on petitions (40).

IV. Additional requirements for the biennium 2006-2007

10. Should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/C.3/60/L.17, additional resources estimated at $505,700 for travel, per diem and terminal expenses for the members of the Committee to attend a third annual session of three weeks in each year of the biennium 2006-2007, with a one-week pre-session working group meeting for each session, effective from January 2006, are proposed under section 9 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007. General temporary assistance equivalent to 18 work-months at the P-3 level, estimated at $233,900, is also proposed under section 9. Furthermore, additional conference-servicing costs are estimated at $8,689,800 under section 2 and support costs at $89,900 under section 28D for the biennium 2006-2007.

11. The above requirements relating to the additional meetings of the Committee and the pre-session working group meetings are enumerated in the table below.

(United States dollars)

	2006	*2007*	*Total*
Section 9, Economic and social affairs			
Travel, per diem and terminal expenses	252 800	252 900	505 700
General temporary assistance	116 900	117 000	233 900
Subtotal	**369 700**	**369 900**	**739 600**
Section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management			
Meetings servicing, interpretation and documentation	3 751 400	4 938 400	8 689 800
Section 28D, Office of Central Support Services			
Support services	39 800	50 100	89 900
Total	**4 160 900**	**5 358 400**	**9 519 300**

V. Contingency fund

12. It will be recalled that, under the procedures established by the General Assembly in its resolutions 41/213 of 19 December 1986 and 42/211 of 21 December 1987, a contingency fund is established for each biennium to accommodate additional expenditures derived from legislative mandates not provided for in the programme budget. Under this procedure, if additional expenditures were proposed that exceed the resources available from the contingency fund, the activities concerned would be implemented only through the redeployment of resources from low-priority areas or the modification of existing activities. Otherwise, such additional activities would have to be deferred to a later biennium.

VI. Summary

13. **Should draft resolution A/C.3/60/L.17 be adopted by the General Assembly, additional resources in the total amount of $9,519,300 would be required under section 9, Economic and social affairs ($739,600), section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management ($8,689,800) and section 28D, Office of Central Support Services ($89,900) of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007. This would represent a charge against the contingency fund and, as such, would require appropriations for the biennium 2006-2007 to be approved by the General Assembly at its sixtieth session.**